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Container

The present invention relates to a packaged detergent composition comprising a container which at least partly disintegrates in an aqueous environment, the detergent composition comprising at least one liquid
10 phase and at least one solid substantially insoluble in the liquid phase and having a size sufficiently large to be retained by a 2.5 mm mesh. The invention is particularly useful in warewashing in automatic dishwashing machines or laundry washing machines.

15 Containers made of a material that at least partly disintegrate in an aqueous environment, and in particular those made of a water-soluble film material, are known for packaging detergent compositions, including detergent additive compositions. In particular in the case of
20 liquid compositions, such packaged detergents are found to be attractive to consumers because of easier handling and dosing, and avoiding spillage when dropped.

Such containers, in particular so-called sachets, i.e. flexible pouch-like packages, are known from a
25 number of documents of prior art. For example, EP 0 507 404 B1 discloses detergent containing sachets for use in an automatic dishwashing machine, those sachets, however, containing detergent powder material.

It is also known to manufacture water-soluble
30 containers having more than one compartment to enable

5 presence in the same container of compositions having
some kind of mutual incompatibility. Laundry additive
sachets containing one or more liquid composition and
having two or more compartments are known from EP 1 126
070 A1 and WO 01/61099. Other types of detergent material
10 packaged in a water-soluble polymeric material are known
from WO 01/29172A1 and WO 01/40432A1.

It has been considered, for different reasons, to
provide a water-soluble sachets containing a detergent
composition comprising at least one liquid phase and at
15 least one solid of a substantial size. Such a solid may
contain ingredients to be protected from the liquid
phase, or ingredients which are soluble in the liquid
phase, and may, for that reason, be surrounded by a
protective coating insoluble in the liquid phase. It may
20 also be intended to incorporate ingredients in such a
solid to provide for a sequential release profile of
ingredients from the solid, i.e. either delayed release
by providing specific coatings or the like, or
accelerated release by providing means for disintegration
25 and release of ingredients into the washing liquor.
Moreover, such packaged detergent compositions may be
particularly attractive to consumers because of their
specific aesthetic appearance.

However, there is a specific problem, which may
30 arise in the case of the combination of a viscous liquid
with a solid contained therein. When water-soluble
packages comprising a viscous liquid compositions and at
least one solid is added into water the package dissolves

5 exposing its contents to the aqueous environment.
Usually, after dissolution/disintegration of the package,
it takes some time for the viscous liquid composition to
dissolve/diffuse within the aqueous environment.
Actually, it has been observed that, after
10 dissolution/disintegration of the water-soluble package,
the liquid can maintain its shape as a consequence of its
viscosity for a certain time period.

When the packaged detergent additionally comprises
at least one solid contained within and being insoluble
15 in the viscous liquid, the above described delayed
dissolution/diffusion of the liquid may hinder the
release of the solid into the washing liquor by holding
it therein. This is particularly disadvantageous if the
solid is intended for fast dissolution in the washing
20 liquor, i.e. for early release of ingredients contained
therein to be active in an early stage of the washing
procedure. One example of such ingredients may be
enzymes, which are temperature-sensitive and should act
in the washing liquor at an early stage when the
25 temperature has not been raised to a substantial extent.

Therefore, it is an object of the present invention
to provide for an improved packaged detergent of above-
described type allowing easy and early release of
solid(s) contained in the liquid after
30 dissolution/disintegration of the water-soluble package
material in the washing liquor.

5 The present invention provides, for a solution of this object, for a packed detergent composition of the above-defined type wherein the at least one solid has a density lower than the density of the liquid.

10 Preferably, the at least one liquid has a dispersion/dissolution time in water at 10°C of more than 30 s measured under the following test conditions:

15 The solid, or at least any coating that is used on the solid, is soluble in the water environment into which it is released, but it is insoluble in the liquid of the packaged detergent composition.

20 The solid may be any size such as a powder, particle, granule, or larger. Larger solid may be prepared by any number of techniques such as compaction, extrusion or agglomeration techniques known to the skilled person. Larger solid is preferred and is ideally sufficiently large that it will be retained by a 2.5mm mesh.

Method for measuring dispersion-dissolution time of the liquid phase:

25 A 5 l beaker (diameter: 18 cm) is filled with 4.5, l tap water (15-20°dH). The temperature is maintained at 40 °C. A propeller-stirrer with a diameter of 78 mm is immersed into the beaker (immersion depth 53.5 mm).

5 A sachet made by thermoforming PT75, filled it with
18 ml of the liquid composition to be tested and sealed
with PT75 is dropped into the pre-heated water, which is
stirred at 150 rpm.

The sachet starts dissolving and the time (in
10 seconds) elapsed until the release of the liquid phase
into water starts (T_{start}) is determined either visually
if the liquid phase is colored or generates turbidity
when being dissolved in water, or alternatively by
detecting the increase in conductivity of water.

15 The sachet is then visually observed and the time
when its height is reduced by 80 % is annotated as the
final time (in seconds).

The dispersion/dissolution time of the liquid composition is then calculated as:

$$T_{\text{disp}} = T_{\text{final}} - T_{\text{start}}$$

It has also been observed that the reduction of the solid's release time when using a floating solid with a density lower than the density of the liquid according to the invention is more pronounced when the liquid phase has a viscosity of at least 100 mPa.s, preferably at least 500 mPa.s, more preferably at least 1.000 mPa.s, most preferably at least 10.000 mPa.s..

5 Preferably, the container holding the packaged
detergent composition of the present invention is a
sachet. The material of the container is preferably
essentially water-soluble, in particular it preferably
comprises polyvinyl alcohol. By use of the term "water-
10 soluble" we also include water-dispersible.

 The packaged detergent of the present invention is
particularly useful for use in a laundry washing machine,
more preferably in an automatic dishwashing machine where
mechanical agitation of the washing liquor is less
15 intense.

 It has now surprisingly been observed that the
above-described hindrance of the release of the solid(s)
into the washing liquor can reliably be avoided by
adjusting the density of the solid(s) to be less than the
20 density of the liquid in which it is contained. By that
means, the solid(s) is (are) floating or easily rising to
the outer surface of the viscous liquid composition.
Compared to a situation where the solid(s) is (are)
completely surrounded by the viscous liquid, it is then
25 much more exposed to the washing liquor and therefore
easier to be released thereinto. This effect is
surprisingly distinct and has been shown in a
specifically designed method for measuring the solid
release from a water-soluble sachet according to above-
30 described type. This measurement method is disclosed in
more detail in the context of the following example,
which is intended for illustration only and not for

5 limiting the invention beyond the scope as defined in the
claims.

 In all executions under the present invention the
packaging may be formed using different techniques known
to the expert in the field of forming water-soluble
10 packaging. As non-limiting examples of such techniques
one can mention techniques making use of processes
moulding the water-soluble raw material of the packaging,
especially injection moulding or blow moulding, and also
techniques making use of a preformed film of water-
15 soluble material such as thermoforming, vertical form-
fill-sealing or horizontal form-fill-sealing.

 In the case of techniques making use of preformed
film materials, the film may be a single film, or a
20 laminated film as disclosed in GB-A-2,244,258. While a
single film may have pinholes, the two or more layers in
a laminate are unlikely to have pinholes, which coincide.

 The film itself may be produced by any process, for
25 example by extrusion and blowing or by casting. The film
may be unoriented, monoaxially oriented or biaxially
oriented. If the layers in the film are oriented, they
usually have the same orientation, although their planes
of orientation may be different if desired.

30

 The layers in a laminate may be the same or
different. Thus they may each comprise the same polymer
or a different polymer.

5 Examples of water-soluble polymers which may be used
in a single layer film or in one or more layers of a
lamine or which may be used for injection moulding or
blow moulding are poly(vinyl alcohol) (PVOH), cellulose
derivatives such as hydroxypropyl methyl cellulose (HPMC)
10 and gelatine. An example of a preferred PVOH is
ethoxylated PVOH. The PVOH may be partially or fully
alcoholised or hydrolysed. For example it may be from 40
to 100%, preferably from 70 to 92%, more preferably about
88% or about 92%, alcoholised or hydrolysed. The degree
15 of hydrolysis is known to influence the temperature at
which the PVOH starts to dissolve in water. 88%
hydrolysis corresponds to a film soluble in cold (i.e.
room temperature) water, whereas 92% hydrolysis
corresponds to a film soluble in warm water.

20

The thickness of the film used to produce the
container, which may be in the form of a pocket, is
preferably 30 to 300 μm , more preferably 40 to 200 μm ,
especially 60 to 170 μm , and most especially 65 to 155
25 μm .

In one possible execution using film material the
packaging may be formed by, for example, vacuum forming
or thermoforming. For example, in a thermoforming
30 process the film may be drawn down or blown down into a
mould. Thus, for example, the film is heated to the
thermoforming temperature using a thermoforming heater
plate assembly, and then drawn down under vacuum or blown
down under pressure into the mould. Plug-assisted
35 thermoforming and pre-stretching the film, for example by
blowing the film away from the mould before

5 thermoforming, may, if desired, be used. One skilled in the art can choose an appropriate temperature, pressure or vacuum and dwell time to achieve an appropriate pocket. The amount of vacuum or pressure and the thermoforming temperature used depend on the thickness
10 and porosity of the film and on the polymer or mixture of polymers being used. Thermoforming of PVOH films is known and described in, for example, WO 00/55045.

A suitable forming temperature for PVOH or
15 ethoxylated PVOH is, for example, from 90 to 130°C, especially 90 to 120°C. A suitable forming pressure is, for example, 69 to 138kPa (10 to 20 p.s.i.), especially 83 to 117 kPa (12 to 17 p.s.i.). A suitable forming vacuum is 0 to 4 kPa (0 to 40 mbar), especially 0 to 2
20 kPa (0 to 20 mbar). A suitable dwell time is, for example, 0.4 to 2.5 seconds, especially 2 to 2.5 seconds.

While desirably conditions chosen within the above ranges, it is possible to use one or more of these
25 parameters outside the above ranges, although it may be necessary to compensate by changing the values of the other two parameters.

When the container comprises more than one
30 compartment each compartment may be formed by any of the above mentioned techniques.

The compartments are then filled with the desired compositions. The compartments may be completely filled
35 or only partially filled. The composition may be a solid. For example, it may be a particulate or

5 granulated solid, or a tablet. It may also be a liquid,
which may be thickened or gelled if desired. The liquid
composition may be non-aqueous or aqueous, for example
comprising less than or more than 5% total or free water.
The composition may have more than one phase. For
10 example it may comprise an aqueous composition and a
liquid composition which is immiscible with the aqueous
composition. It may also comprise a liquid composition
and a separate solid composition, for example in the form
of a ball, pill or speckles.

15

The container may contain more than one component;
for instance it may contain two components which are
incompatible with each other. It may also contain a
20 component, which is incompatible with the part of the
container enclosing the other component. For example,
the second composition may be incompatible with the part
of the container enclosing the first composition.

25 Alternatively the packaging may be formed of, for
example, a moulded composition, especially one produced
by injection moulding or blow moulding. The walls of the
compartment may, for example, have a thickness of greater
than 100 μm , for example greater than 150 μm or greater
30 than 200 μm , 300 μm , 500 μm , 750 μm or 1mm. Preferably
the walls have a thickness of from 200 to 400 μm .

The composition may be a fabric care, surface care
or dishwashing composition. Thus, for example, it may be
35 a dishwashing, water softening, laundry or detergent
composition, or a rinse aid. Such compositions may be

5 suitable for use in a domestic washing machine. The composition may also be a disinfectant, antibacterial or antiseptic composition, or a refill composition for a trigger-type spray. Such compositions are generally packaged in amounts of from 5 to 100 g, especially from 10 15 to 40 g. For example, a dishwashing composition may weigh from 15 to 30 g, a water-softening composition may weigh from 15 to 40 g.

The composition, if in liquid form, may be 15 anhydrous or comprise water, for example at least 5 wt %, preferably at least 10 wt%, water based on the weight of the aqueous composition.

In case more than one composition is packaged, the 20 compositions may be the same or different. If they are different, they may, nevertheless, have one or more individual components in common.

In a possible execution a sealing member is placed 25 on top of the first compartment previously filed and sealed thereto.

The sealing member may be produced by, for example, injection moulding or blow moulding. It may also be in 30 the form of a film.

The sealing member may optionally comprise a second composition at the time it is placed on top of the first compartment. This may be held or otherwise adhered on 35 the sealing member. For example it can be in the form of a solid composition such as a ball or pill held on the

5 sealing member by an adhesive or mechanical means. This
is especially appropriate when the sealing member has a
degree of rigidity, such as when it has been produced by
injection moulding. It is also possible for a previously
prepared container containing the second composition to
10 be adhered to the sealing member. For example, a sealing
member in the form of a film may have a filled
compartment containing a composition attached thereto.
The second composition or compartment may be held on
either side of the sealing member such that it is inside
15 or outside the first compartment.

Generally, however, the second composition is held
within a second compartment in the sealing member. This
is especially appropriate when the sealing member is
20 flexible, for example in the form of a film.

The sealing member is placed on top of the first
compartment and sealed thereto. For example the sealing
member in the form of a film may be placed over a filled
25 pocket and across the sealing portion, if present, and
the films sealed together at the sealing portion. In
general there is only one second compartment or
composition in or on the sealing member, but it is
possible to have more than one second compartment or
30 composition if desired, for example 2 or 3 second
compartments or compositions.

The second compartment may be formed by any
technique. for example, be formed by vertical form fill
35 sealing the second composition within a film, such as by
the process described in WO 89/12587. It can also be

5 formed by having an appropriate shape for an injection
moulding.

 However, it is preferred to use a vacuum forming or
thermoforming techniques , such as that previously
10 described in relation to the first compartment of the
container of the present invention.. Thus, for example, a
pocket surrounded by a sealing portion is formed in a
film, the pocket is filled with the second composition, a
film is placed on top of the filled pocket and across the
15 sealing portion and the films are sealed together at the
sealing portion. In general, however, the film placed on
top of the filled pocket to form the second compartment
does not itself comprise a further compartment.

20

 Further details of this thermoforming process are
generally the same as those given above in relation to
the first compartment of the container of the present
invention. All of the above details are incorporated by
25 reference to the second compartment, with the following
differences:

 The second compartment is often smaller than the
first compartment since the film containing the second
30 composition is used to form a lid on the pocket. In
general the first compartment and the second compartment
(or composition if not held within a compartment) have a
volume ratio of from 1:1 to 20:1, preferable 2:1 to 10:1.
Generally the second compartment does not extend across
35 the sealing portion.

5 The thickness of the film comprising the second compartment may also be less than the thickness of the film making up the first compartment of the container of the present invention, because the film is not subjected to as much localised stretching in the thermoforming
10 step. It is also desirable to have a thickness which is less than that of the film used to form the first compartment to ensure a sufficient heat transfer through the film to soften the base web if heat sealing is used.

15 The thickness of the covering film is generally from 20 to 160 μm , preferably from 40 to 100 μm , such as 40 to 90 μm or 50 to 80 μm .

20 This film may be a single-layered film but is desirably laminated to reduce the possibility of pinholes allowing leakage through the film. The film may be the same or different as the film forming the first compartment. If two or more films are used to form the film comprising the second compartment, the films may be
25 the same or different. Examples of suitable films are those given for the film forming the first compartment.

30 The first compartment and the sealing member may be sealed together by any suitable means, for example by means of an adhesive or by heat sealing. Mechanical means is particularly appropriate if both have been prepared by injection moulding. Other methods of sealing include infrared, radio frequency, ultrasonic, laser, solvent, vibration and spin welding. An adhesive such as
35 an aqueous solution of PVOH may also be used. The seal

5 desirably is water-soluble if the containers are water-soluble.

If heat sealing is used, a suitable sealing temperature is, for example, 120 to 195°C, for example
10 140 to 150°C. A suitable sealing pressure is, for example, from 250 to 600 kPa. Examples of sealing pressures are 276 to 552 kPa (40 to 80 p.s.i.), especially 345 to 483 kPa (50 to 70 p.s.i.) or 400 to 800 kPa (4 to 8 bar), especially 500 to 700 kPa (5 to 7 bar)
15 depending on the heat-sealing machine used. Suitable sealing dwell times are 0.4 to 2.5 seconds.

One skilled in the art can use an appropriate temperature, pressure and dwell time to achieve a seal of
20 the desired integrity. While desirably conditions are chosen within the above ranges, it is possible to use one or more of these parameters outside the above ranges, although it might be necessary to compensate by changing the values of the other two parameters.

25

In a second embodiment of the invention, the sealing member does not comprise the second composition at the time it is placed on top of the first component. Instead the second composition is added afterwards. Thus, for
30 example, it may be adhered to the sealing member by means of an adhesive. It may also be adhered by mechanical means, particularly when the sealing member has a degree of rigidity, for example when injection moulding has produced it. Another possibility is for the sealing
35 member to contain an indentation, which is filled, either

5 before or after sealing, by a liquid composition, which
is allowed to gel in-situ.

If more than one container is formed at the same
time from the same sheet, the containers may then be
10 separated from each other, for example by cutting the
sealing portions, or flanges. Alternatively, they may be
left conjoined and, for example, perforations provided
between the individual containers so that they can be
easily separated a later stage, for example by a
15 consumer. If the containers are separated, the flanges
may be left in place. However, desirably the flanges are
partially removed in order to provide an even more
attractive appearance. Generally the flanges remaining
should be as small as possible for aesthetic purposes
20 while bearing in mind that some flange is required to
ensure the two films remain adhered to each other. A
flange having a width of 1 mm to 8 mm is desirable,
preferably 2 mm to 7 mm, most preferably about 5 mm.

25 The containers may themselves be packaged in outer
containers if desired, for example non-water soluble
containers, which are removed, before the water-soluble
containers are used.

30 The containers produced by the process of the
present invention, especially when used for a fabric
care, surface care or dishwashing composition, may have a
maximum dimension of 5 cm, excluding any flanges. For
example, a container may have a length of 1 to 5 cm,
35 especially 3.5 to 4.5 cm, a width of 1.5 to 3.5 cm,

5 especially 2 to 3 cm, and a height of 1 to 3 cm,
especially 1.25 to 2.00 cm.

The ingredients of the compositions depend on the
use of such compositions. Thus, for example, the
10 composition may contain surface-active agents such as a
nonionic, anionic, cationic, amphoteric or zwitterionic
surface-active agents or mixtures thereof.

Examples of non-ionic surfactants useful in the
15 compositions of the present invention are preferably
bleach-stable surfactants. Non-ionic surfactants
generally are well known, being described in more detail
in Kirk Othmer's Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology, 3rd
Ed., Vol. 22, pp. 360-379, "Surfactants and Deterative
20 Systems", incorporated by reference herein.

One possible class of nonionics are ethoxylated non-
ionic surfactants prepared by the reaction of a
monohydroxy alkanol or alkylphenol with 6 to 20 carbon
25 atoms with at least 1 mole, preferably at least 3
moles, more preferably at least 12 moles particularly
preferred at least 16 moles, and still more preferred at
least 20 moles of ethylene oxide per mole of alcohol or
alkylphenol.

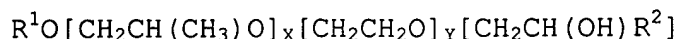
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Particularly preferred non-ionic surfactants are the
non-ionic from a linear chain fatty alcohol with 16-20
carbon atoms and at least 12 moles particularly preferred
at least 16 and still more preferred at least 20 moles of
35 ethylene oxide per mole of alcohol.

5 According to one preferred embodiment of the
invention, the non-ionic surfactants additionally
comprise propylene oxide units in the molecule.
Preferably this PO units constitute up to 25% by weight,
preferably up to 20% by weight and still more preferably
10 up to 15% by weight of the overall molecular weight of
the non-ionic surfactant. Particularly preferred
surfactants are ethoxylated mono-hydroxy alkanols or
alkylphenols, which additionally comprises
polyoxyethylene-polyoxypropylene block copolymer units.
15 The alcohol or alkylphenol portion of such surfactants
constitutes more than 30%, preferably more than 50%, more
preferably more than 70% by weight of the overall
molecular weight of the non-ionic surfactant.

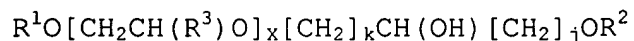
20 Another class of non-ionic surfactants includes
reverse block copolymers of polyoxyethylene and
polyoxypropylene and block copolymers of polyoxyethylene
and polyoxypropylene initiated with trimethylolpropane.

25 Another preferred moderate-to-high cloud point
nonionic surfactant can be described by the formula:



where R^1 represents a linear or branched chain aliphatic
30 hydrocarbon group with 4-18 carbon atoms or mixtures
thereof, R^2 represents a linear or branched chain
aliphatic hydrocarbon rest with 2-26 carbon atoms or
mixtures thereof, x is a value between 0.5 and 1.5 and y
is a value of at least 15.

5 Another group of preferred nonionic surfactants are the end-capped polyoxyalkylated non-ionics of formula:

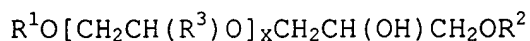


10 w[where R^1 and R^2 represent linear or branched chain, saturated or unsaturated, alyphatic or aromatic hydrocarbon groups with 1-30 carbon atoms, R^3 represents a hydrogen atom or a methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, iso-propyl, n-butyl, 2-butyl or 2-methyl-2-butyl group ,
15 x is a value between 1 and 30 and, k and j are values between 1 and 12, preferably between 1 and 5. When the value of x is ≥ 2 each R^3 in the formula above can be different. R^1 and R^2 are preferably linear or branched chain, saturated or unsaturated, alyphatic or aromatic
20 hydrocarbon groups with 6-22 carbon atoms, where group with 8 to 18 carbon atoms are particularly preferred. For the group R^3 H, methyl or ethyl are particularly preferred. Particularly preferred values for x are comprised between 1 and 20, preferably between 6 and 15.

25

As described above, in case $x \geq 2$, each R^3 in the formula can be different. For instance, when $x=3$, the group R^3 could be chosen to build ethylene oxide ($R^3=H$) or propylene oxide ($R^3=\text{methyl}$) units which can be used in
30 every single order for instance (PO)(EO)(EO), (EO)(PO)(EO), (EO)(EO)(PO), (EO)(EO)(EO), (PO)(EO)(PO), (PO)(PO)(EO) and (PO)(PO)(PO). The value 3 for x is only an example and bigger values can be chosen whereby a higher number of variations of (EO) or (PO) units would
35 arise.

5 Particularly preferred end-capped polyoxyalkylated
alcohols of the above formula are those where $k=1$ and $j=1$
originating molecules of simplified formula:



10

Further nonionic surfactants are, for example, C_{10} - C_{18}
alkyl polyglycosides, such as C_{12} - C_{16} alkyl polyglycosides,
especially the polyglucosides. These are especially
15 useful when high foaming compositions are desired.
Further surfactants are polyhydroxy fatty acid amides,
such as C_{10} - C_{18} N-(3-methoxypropyl) glucamides and
ethylene oxide-propylene oxide block polymers of the
Pluronic type.

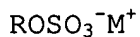
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The use of mixtures of different nonionic
surfactants is particularly preferred in the context of
the present invention for instances mixtures of
alkoxylated alcohols and hydroxy group containing
25 alkoxylated alcohols.

Examples of anionic surfactants are straight-chained
or branched alkyl sulfates and alkyl polyalkoxylated
sulfates, also known as alkyl ether sulfates. Such
30 surfactants may be produced by the sulfation of higher
 C_8 - C_{20} fatty alcohols.

Examples of primary alkyl sulfate surfactants are
those of formula:

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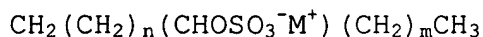
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wherein R is a linear C₈-C₂₀ hydrocarbyl group and M is a water-solubilising cation. Preferably R is C₁₀-C₁₆ alkyl, for example C₁₂-C₁₄, and M is alkali metal such as lithium, sodium or potassium.

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Examples of secondary alkyl sulfate surfactants are those which have the sulfate moiety on a "backbone" of the molecule, for example those of formula:

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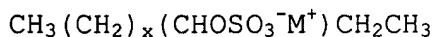
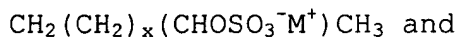


wherein m and n are independently 2 or more, the sum of m+n typically being 6 to 20, for example 9 to 15, and M is a water-solubilising cation such as lithium, sodium or potassium.

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Especially preferred secondary alkyl sulfates are the (2,3) alkyl sulfate surfactants of formulae:

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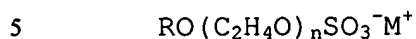


for the 2-sulfate and 3-sulfate, respectively. In these formulae x is at least 4, for example 6 to 20, preferably 10 to 16. M is cation, such as an alkali metal, for example lithium, sodium or potassium.

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Examples of alkoxyated alkyl sulfates are ethoxyated alkyl sulfates of the formula:

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wherein R is a C_8 - C_{20} alkyl group, preferably C_{10} - C_{18} such as a C_{12} - C_{16} , n is at least 1, for example from 1 to 20, preferably 1 to 15, especially 1 to 6, and M is a salt-forming cation such as lithium, sodium, potassium, ammonium, alkylammonium or alkanolammonium. These compounds can provide especially desirable fabric cleaning performance benefits when used in combination with alkyl sulfates.

15

The alkyl sulfates and alkyl ether sulfates will generally be used in the form of mixtures comprising varying alkyl chain lengths and, if present, varying degrees of alkoxylation.

20

Other anionic surfactants, which may be employed, are salts of fatty acids, for example C_8 - C_{18} fatty acids, especially the sodium or potassium salts, and alkyl, for example C_8 - C_{18} , benzene sulfonates.

25

Examples of cationic surfactants are those of the quaternary ammonium type.

The total content of surfactants in the composition is desirably 60 to 95 wt%, especially 75 to 90 wt%. Desirably an anionic surfactant is present in an amount of 50 to 75 wt%, the nonionic surfactant is present in an amount of 5 to 20 wt%, and/or the cationic surfactant is present in an amount of from 0 to 20 wt%. The amounts are based on the total solids content of the composition, i.e. excluding any solvent, which may be present.

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The composition, particularly when used as laundry washing or dishwashing composition, may also comprise enzymes, such as protease, lipase, amylase, cellulase and peroxidase enzymes. Such enzymes are commercially available and sold, for example, under the registered trademarks Esperase, Alcalase and Savinase by Novo Industries A/S and Maxatase by International Biosynthetics, Inc. Desirably the enzymes are present in the composition in an amount of from 0.5 to 3 wt%, especially 1 to 2 wt%.

The composition may, if desired, comprise a thickening agent or gelling agent. Suitable thickeners are polyacrylate polymers such as those sold under the trademark CARBOPOL, or the trademark ACUSOL by Rohm and Haas Company. Other suitable thickeners are xanthan gums. The thickener, if present, is generally present in an amount of from 0.2 to 4 wt%, especially 0.5 to 2 wt%.

Dishwasher compositions usually comprise a detergency builder. Suitable builders are alkali metal or ammonium phosphates, polyphosphates, phosphonates, polyphosphonates, carbonates, bicarbonates, borates, polyhydroxysulfonates, polyacetates, carboxylates such as citrates, and polycarboxylates. The builder is desirably present in an amount of up to 90 wt%, preferably 15 to 90 wt%, more preferable 15 to 75 wt%, relative to the total weight of the composition. Further details of suitable components are given in, for example, EP-A-694,059, EP-A-518,720 and WO 99/06522.

5 The compositions can also optionally comprise one or
more additional ingredients. These include conventional
detergent composition components such as further
surfactants, bleaches, bleach enhancing agents, builders,
suds boosters or suds suppressors, anti-tarnish and anti-
10 corrosion agents, organic solvents, co-solvents, phase
stabilisers, emulsifying agents, preservatives, soil
suspending agents, soil release agents, germicides, pH
adjusting agents or buffers, non-builder alkalinity
sources, chelating agents, clays such as smectite clays,
15 enzyme stabilisers, anti-limescale agents, colorants,
dyes, hydrotropes, dye transfer inhibiting agents,
brighteners, and perfumes. If used, such optional
ingredients will generally constitute no more than 10
wt%, for example from 1 to 6 wt%, the total weight of the
20 compositions.

The builders counteract the effects of calcium, or
other ion, water hardness encountered during laundering
or bleaching use of the compositions herein. Examples of
25 such materials are citrate, succinate, malonate,
carboxymethyl succinate, carboxylate, polycarboxylate and
polyacetyl carboxylate salts, for example with alkali
metal or alkaline earth metal cations, or the
corresponding free acids. Specific examples are sodium,
30 potassium and lithium salts of oxydisuccinic acid,
mellitic acid, benzene polycarboxylic acids, C₁₀-C₂₂ fatty
acids and citric acid. Other examples are organic
phosphonate type sequestering agents such as those sold
by Monsanto under the trademark Dequest and alkylhydroxy
35 phosphonates. Citrate salts and C₁₂-C₁₈ fatty acid soaps
are preferred.

5

Other suitable builders are polymers and copolymers known to have builder properties. For example, such materials include appropriate polyacrylic acid, polymaleic acid, and polyacrylic/polymaleic and
10 copolymers and their salts, such as those sold by BASF under the trademark Sokalan.

The builders generally constitute from 0 to 3 wt%, more preferably from 0.1 to 1 wt%, by weight of the
15 compositions.

Compositions, which comprise an enzyme, may optionally contain materials, which maintain the stability of the enzyme. Such enzyme stabilisers
20 include, for example, polyols such as propylene glycol, boric acid and borax. Combinations of these enzyme stabilisers may also be employed. If utilised, the enzyme stabilisers generally constitute from 0.1 to 1 wt% of the compositions.

25

The compositions may optionally comprise materials, which serve as phase stabilisers and/or co-solvents. Examples are C₁-C₃ alcohols such as methanol, ethanol and propanol. C₁-C₃ alkanolamines such as mono-, di- and
30 triethanolamines can also be used, by themselves or in combination with the alcohols. The phase stabilisers and/or co-solvents can, for example, constitute 0 to 1 wt%, preferably 0.1 to 0.5 wt%, of the composition.

35 The compositions may optionally comprise components, which adjust or maintain the pH of the compositions at

5 optimum levels. The pH may be from, for example, 1 to
13, such as 8 to 11 depending on the nature of the
composition. For example a dishwashing composition
desirably has a pH of 8 to 11, a laundry composition
desirable has a pH of 7 to 9, and a water-softening
10 composition desirably has a pH of 7 to 9. Examples of pH
adjusting agents are NaOH and citric acid.

The primary composition and the secondary
composition may be appropriately chosen depending on the
15 desired use of the article.

If the article is for use in laundry washing, the
first composition may comprise, for example, a detergent,
and the second composition may comprise a bleach, stain
20 remover, water-softener, enzyme or fabric conditioner.
The article may be adapted to release the compositions at
different times during the laundry wash. For example, a
bleach or fabric conditioner is generally released at the
end of a wash, and a water softener is generally released
25 at the start of a wash. An enzyme may be released at the
start or the end of a wash.

If the article is for use as a fabric conditioner,
the first composition may comprise a fabric conditioner
30 and the second composition may comprise an enzyme, which
is released before or after the fabric conditioner in a
rinse cycle.

If the article is for use in dish washing the first
35 composition may comprise a detergent and the second
composition may comprise a water-softener, salt, enzyme,

5 rinse aid, bleach or bleach activator. The article may
be adapted to release the compositions at different times
during the laundry wash. For example, a rinse aid,
bleach or bleach activator is generally released at the
end of a wash, and a water softener, salt or enzyme is
10 generally released at the start of a wash.

EXAMPLE

26.5 g detergent composition, usual and suitable for use
in an automatic dishwashing machine, as shown in Table I,
and being a liquid composition of a viscosity of about
15 ... mPas, is filled into a package made by thermoforming
a polyvinyl alcohol film with a thickness of 75 µm.

TABLE I

	% wt.
Potassium tripolyphosphate	30.00
Sodium citrate	30.00
Enzymes	0.97
Polyacrylate	0.25
Phosphoric acid	0.10
Water	38.680
Density	1,5 g/ml

A mixture of 55 wt.-% of molten polyethylene glycol with
20 an average molecular weight of 35.000 (PEG 35.000) and 45
wt.-% of a non-ionic surfactant (Plurafac LF 403®) is
prepared and used to coat core particles of different

5 sizes and weight to obtain solid(s) with a constant overall diameter of 11 mm. By this method, solid(s) with the same composition on its surface and the same size were obtained, however allowing to adjust the densities by variation of the density of the core particles.

10 The solid(s), as obtained, were dropped into the filled thermoformed package prior to closing it by heat sealing.

Method for measuring solid release from water-soluble sachet

15 A 5 l beaker (diameter: 18 cm) is filled with 4.5, l tap water (15-20°dH). The temperature is maintained at 40 °C. A propeller-stirrer with a diameter of 78 mm is immersed into the beaker (immersion depth 53.5 mm).

A sachet is dropped into the pre-heated water which
20 is stirred at 150 rpm.

The sachet is visually observed and the time elapsed until at least 50 % of the solid is exposed to the solution is annotated as the release time.

Three different products, produced as described
25 herein-above, are tested according to that method, and the results are shown in Table II.

5

TABLE II

Density of solid (g/ml)	Δ density (g/ml)	Release time (min)
1,1	-0,4	2,0
1,9	+0,4	4,5
2,5	+1,0	4,5

From the results, it is obvious, that the release time of the solid into the aqueous environment is much better when the density of the solid is lower than the density
10 of the liquid composition in which the solid is contained, thus allowing floating or easy rising of the solid to the surface of the liquid viscous composition.

The features disclosed in the foregoing description, in the claims and/or drawings in the accompanying
15 drawings may, both separately and in any combination thereof, be material for realizing the invention in diverse forms thereof.